

Chapter 10

Plan Implementation

Pursuant to direction from Montana statutes, this plan compiles information about basin water resources and raises, discusses, and makes recommendations addressing key basin water issues. The ultimate value of the plan, however, will be determined not by the plan itself, but whether and how it is implemented. This chapter proposes a method for plan implementation. Because conditions in the basin are not static, the Task Force also proposes a means for evaluating and modifying the plan as needed.

Task Force Continuation

This plan was drafted not by a government agency but by the Task Force, which was composed of representatives of a broad range of local basin water interests. The Task Force, rather than a government agency, therefore, has the greatest stake in overseeing implementation of the plan and for maintaining its utility as basin conditions change. To maximize the value of the plan, the mandate of the Task Force should be continued and extended explicitly by the Legislature to include continuing plan implementation oversight and evaluation.

Continuing the Task Force would also have other important benefits. While federal, state, and basin tribal government agencies have water management responsibilities, individual water users have a vested interest in water use that is recognized by the state in granting a property right to use water. The Task Force affords representatives of the local basin water users and their interests (including agriculture, conservation and environmental organizations, hydropower utilities, and Tribal and local governments) the opportunity to work together directly and collaboratively via the plan to influence basin water management. In addition, over the two years during which the plan was developed, Task Force members have communicated directly and developed a shared understanding of basin water resources, legal and management processes, and each other's values and concerns. Continuing the Task Force would maintain and build upon this shared communication and understanding. Finally, the Task Force can provide a means to coordinate and stimulate activities of the many watershed planning groups focused on specific areas of the basin.

Task Force Budget and Funding

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Montana Legislature appropriated \$120,000 to fund the development of the plan over a two-year period. Continuing the Task Force and requiring it to oversee implementation of the plan as well as its periodic revision would require substantially less funds. Rather than the monthly meetings during the plan development, implementation oversight and plan revision would likely necessitate only quarterly Task Force meetings plus one meeting to convene representatives of all of the basin's 13 watershed groups. An estimated annual budget totaling about \$20,000 to fund the quarterly meetings and the convening of the watershed group representatives is shown in Table 10-1.

Table 10-1
Clark Fork Task Force Annual Budget

Item	Cost Details	SubTotal	Annual Total
1. Meeting Expenses			
a. Preparation & facilitation	25 hours @ \$75/hour	\$1,875	
b. Task Force expenses	Lunch, coffee, room rental @ \$200	\$200	
c. Task Force mileage	1,000 miles @ \$.36/mile	\$360	
d. Copies, postage, telephone, etc.		\$50	
e. Four meeting total			\$9,940
2. Annual Watershed Meeting			
a. Preparation & facilitation	30 hours @ \$75/hour	\$2,250	
b. Meeting expenses	Lunch, coffee, room rental @ \$200	\$250	
c. Participant mileage	1,000 miles @ \$.36/mile	\$360	
d. Supplies	Easel paper, etc.	\$35	
e. Total			\$2,895
3. Plan Implementation Activities			
a. Facilitation	60 hours @ \$75	\$4,500	
b. Mileage & per diem	700 miles @ \$.375 & meals @ \$21.00	\$2,684	
c. Total			\$7,184
4. Total			\$20,019

Plan Implementation Activities

The plan conclusions and recommendations are discussed in chapters 6 through 9 and summarized in Chapter 11. These can be categorized as those requiring short-term implementation, primarily action by the State of Montana through the 2005 Legislature and/or DNRC, or long-term implementation by the state and individual water users and water user organizations. Maintaining the Task Force will be important for overseeing and stimulating implementation of both types of recommendations on behalf of basin water interests, but especially for the long-term category. Task Force oversight will be important to stimulate and monitor action on the following topics.

- Coordinated water management by local basin watershed groups, water user organizations, and individual water users to assure long-term, sustainable water use.
- Negotiations between the State and USBR to contract for a firm block of water storage in Hungry Horse Reservoir to facilitate additional consumptive use of water in the basin.
- Completion by the State of a durable and accurate adjudication of basin water rights within a reasonable time frame, such as five years.
- Resolution of the status of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes water rights through negotiation or litigation as rapidly as possible.
- Continued research on basin water resources, and especially groundwater.
- Continued monitoring of basin stream flow, groundwater, and snow pack.